Skorman: Condemn anti-gay group

GAZETTE 3-8

Council action unlikely in protest at Palmer High

By ED SEALOVER
THE GAZETTE

An anti-gay group may meet opposition if it visits town.

Colorado Springs Vice Mayor Richard Skorman suggested Monday that the City Council condemn a group that may protest homosexuality Friday at Palmer High School.

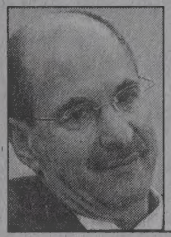
A number of other council members, however, said they would prefer to reaffirm an earlier resolution that condemns all forms of hate speech. They will vote officially on reaffirming that resolution today.

About 15 members of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., are expected to protest near Palmer because students there tried to get a gay-straight alliance club recognized.

The Citizens Project, a local civil rights group, plans a counter-protest.

The church, led by pastor Fred Phelps, is known nationally for its anti-gay rhetoric. Members protested outside the funeral of Matthew Shepard, a gay University of Wyoming student killed in 1998.

Council members passed around images Monday from a Web site that shows church members with signs reading "God Hates Fags" and "Thank God for 9/11."



Vice Mayor Richard Skorman: Hopes council will support his condemnation of group.

Skorman compared the church to neo-Nazis and said the council should oppose its message.

"I just think that as elected officials and leaders, we should make some kind of statement," he said.

Councilmen Scott Hente and Jerry Heimlicher agreed with Skorman.

But several other members noted that in August 2003, the council approved a resolution condemning acts and practices intended to foster hate.

"I'm not in favor of singling out any group," Councilman Larry Small said. "I'm in favor of holding to the message of our resolution."

Mayor Lionel Rivera suggested the council vote at today's 1 p.m. formal meeting to reaffirm that resolution. During discussion, council members can make specific mention of Westboro if they like, he said.

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present Purple Heart medals to 11 soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, at the Special Events Center on Fort Carson.

Sgt. Alan Pitts, 21, wound up among that number during an ambush Oct. 10.

As guerillas opened fire, Pitts' armored personnel carrier ran off a road in Ramadi and smashed through five buildings.

Pitts, who says Iraq service gave him deeper moral convictions and a glimpse at the fragility of life, suffered a pair of broken hips and a herniated disc in his back.

He's still in pain and hoping steroids injected into his spinal cavity will help him heal.

Pitts says he'd return to Iraq as soon as the Army lets him.

"You do it for your buddies," he said. "Sure, I'd go back."

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his parents and grandmothers – drove from the Fort Peck Reserv tion in northeastern Montana to watch.

"I noticed he's still limping," s horn.

Yellowhammer got his parent Army when he was in high scho something different, to make so mother, Sandra Yellowhammer.

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CORRECTIONS
CLARIFICATIONS

The Gazette corrects errors of fact in this space. If you find mistakes, please call 636-0266 during business hours.

• The listing for Five Minute Networking published Sunday on

Wal-Mart hearing I

Woodland Park debate resumes Thursday

By DEEDEE CORRELL
THE GAZETTE

Monday as Wal-Mart officials outlined their plan for the store and opponents listed their reasons against